



SANITARY FUNERALS.

In the light of modern medical knowledge and sanitation, it has become a very important study what to do with a body in the three or four days following decease. It is important both because of the new facts that have come to light as to contagion and because of the many methods devised to prevent decay or to counteract its effects by disinfectants. We believe in the most decorous attention to the body, even though the soul has departed. It represents all that manhood and womanhood and sainthood mean. We believe in such care and such tokens of respect as is consistent with the finest sensibility and the most correct sentiment. We are even unwilling on account of any extreme views to advise private funerals in contagious diseases, unless it be made apparent that they are of such a nature that the corpse cannot be insured as an impossible vehicle of contagion.

First of all, every person that dies should have a thorough washing of the whole body. To two quarts of warm water it is best to add one pint of the chlorinated soda of the shops known as Labarrocque's Solution. A half pound of chloride of lime stirred in the same quantity of water and allowed to settle, and the water poured or strained off, will do as well. A large wad of cotton or a small bag of sawdust mingled with a pound of chloride of lime is well placed under the hips after washing.

The whole process by which the Jews prepared a body for burial may well be imitated in our modern times. The washing was followed by the application of spices to the corpse in the form of ointment or within the folds of linen. Our recent chemical analyses show these spices as not mere odors, but as disinfectants, in their essential oils having the very same combinations that we use less pleasantly. The bandaging of the body closely and neatly in these spices up to the head, which was covered separately, served to encase the remains, so that coffins were rarely used, and, if used, were open. King Asa lay in a bed of spices; and some of these were often burned, as if the more to protect from unwholesomeness. So much have we to learn of ancient Jewish sanitation that Richardson has made Jewish vitality the subject of two essays; and Ernest Hart, the editor of *The Sanitary Record*, has recently lectured in London on the Jewish code of sanitation.

It is plainly feasible to preserve the body by arsenical or other solutions injected into the blood-vessels, the cost being less than seven dollars. There are physicians who believe that this will yet become so practicable as to do away with the cumbersome ice-box.

The changes which take place in a dead body within three or four days after death are such as diminish any danger from the body itself, and need to be counteracted only as would any other moderate contamination of air.

It is to be remembered, too, that the contagions which attend upon certain diseases are not so apt to be transmitted by a dead body as by the clothes upon it or around it, or by the room which had become infected during the life. If for instance, a child deceased of scarlet fever has undergone proper disinfecting ablution and bandaging for burial, and is conveyed to a church or other building, we do not believe any case of disease contracted therefrom can be authenticated. We are sorry to have to criticise the action of some health boards in insisting upon private funerals in so many diseases. To lose dear ones and to have city boards advise all people to avoid you but increase the sorrow of the loss. It is a time for sympathy, which cannot be expressed by distance. If it can be shown that there is danger, then surely we bow to the exigency. But if not, we insist, harm is done by too sweeping ordinances. Let us rather mark well the lines of safety. With sanitation of the body within reach and indicated by the laws of a right cleanliness, let it be known that the danger is not in the body that is dead, but in unaired or non-disinfected rooms, garments, and surroundings. More good comes to society by such facts than by interdicting attendance. In contagious diseases children may not be exposed to the room; but there is no danger in the properly preserved body.

Other unsanitary things suggest themselves. In the country, especially, funerals are sometimes made a tax on the sensibilities and the health. Not long since we saw a mother led up to the coffin of her only babe, to sob and suffer over the last look, until the nervous tension was beyond endurance. A friend, the pastor, was placed in March on a middle step of the stairs to preach a sermon to a crowd,

and had a funnel draught. Delicate before, he is now unable to preach at all. A school friend, now only forty, has a droop of one eye from a cold he caught while preaching in a doorway at a funeral. The long, slow country procession, the standing at the grave, a plaintive hymn sung by delicate ladies, uncovered heads at too long a service—these will do on some days and in some climates and for some people; but a special Providence does not generally protect us at funerals from the usual sequence of the laws of Nature. These go on, and therefore we think we have noticed some increase of practice. We like to help sick people; but rejoice the more in keeping the rest well. So please think over the subject of sanitary funerals.—*N. Y. Independent*.

VALUE OF MEN.—Dr. Farr has an interesting chapter on the pecuniary value of life. A certain amount of expense has to be incurred in any class before a child can attain such an age and such strength that it can earn its own livelihood. It is very difficult to estimate what the expenses of even a careful man who passes through the ordinary University career must have been before he is able to earn anything for himself. Among the lower ranks the problem is simpler, though the facts and the general course of events have, making due allowance for difference in station, a considerable similarity. 'The value of any class of lives is determined by valuing first at birth, or at any age, the cost of future maintenance; and then the value of the future earnings. Thus proceeding, I found the value of a Norfolk agricultural laborer to be £246 at the age of twenty-five; the child is by this method worth only £5 at birth, £56 at the age of five, £117 at the age of ten; the youth £192 at the age of fifteen; the young man £234 at the age of twenty; the man £246 at the age of twenty-five; £241 at the age of thirty, when the value goes on declining to £136 at the age of fifty-five; and only £1 at the age of seventy; the cost of maintenance afterwards exceeding the earnings, the value becomes negative: at 80 the cost of maintenance exceeds the value of the earnings by £41.'—*Supplement to the Thirty-fifth Annual Report of the Registrar-General*, p. xlii. A computation of this kind places the value of a population before us in a new light. We see how great the vigor of the productive activity of the inhabitants of these islands must have been which has enabled the British Empire to make such vast strides in material wealth during the last forty years, while parting with so many of the youngest and ablest of the community to colonise other lands, and to carry to them that wealth which their labor would otherwise have been worth to the mother country.—*London Quarterly*.

POISON PLANTS.—"An Old Subscriber" wishes to know how to distinguish the poisonous species of dogwood, ivy, etc., and the remedy for their effects. Since we suffered from it, climbing over stone walls in Western Massachusetts, we have never come near the ivy, and the same wholesome fear kept us at a safe distance from the dogwood when passing it in a swamp in Windham Co., Ct. We remember it had a sallow, greenish hateful, uncanny look, as much as to say, "I'll hurt you if I get the chance." We didn't care to study it closely. However, a botanical and a medical friend have helped us out. The rhus, or sumach family appears to furnish the most of the poison plant. *R. radicans*, is the "poison ivy," a creeping vine with smooth-pointed leaves growing in threes. *R. toxicodendron*, or "poison oak," is the most common poison shrub, growing three feet high usually, sometimes six to seven, with light-grayish wood and leaves, deeply indented and downy underneath. *R. vernix*, "poison elder," or "poison dogwood," a small tree, ten to fifteen feet high, with dark-green trunk and light-green branches tipped with red, is the most poisonous of all, and is found mostly near the sea-coast. These plants exude a milky juice which blackens on exposure and has a penetrating, nauseous odor. Their flowers are of a greenish-white and appear in June and July. I find the botanical authorities a little mixed in their classification of "poison plants," but the foregoing may be allowed to pass. The poisonous qualities affect persons differently. Some are sensitive even to the odor of the shrubs; others can handle them without injury. There is no remedy for cases of poisoning; they must run their courses like other cutaneous inflammations. The irritation can be allayed by an application of sweet spirits of nitri, or some alkaline preparation.—*Christian Union*.

How to EXERCISE.—The Duke of Wellington said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the play-grounds of England. It was here that the thighs and sinews were developed by means of athletic sports, such as foot-ball and cricket, that made the English army invincible. Exercise, to be in the highest degree beneficial, should not be performed mechanically as a necessary duty. It should partake as much as possible of the nature of sport. The more

merriment combined with it, the better. "Laugh and grow fat" is an aphorism which expresses a physiological truth. Laughing sociables would hardly take the place of gymnasia; but, if we could have a gymnasium whose exercise provoked laughter, it would be a great improvement on the solemn institutions which now exist. Walking, when done rapidly, is excellent exercise; but extremely dull unless there be companionship and an object. Combine the study of botany or geology, and have a jolly companion, and a brisk walk, repeated every day, answers every purpose. Boating, fencing, and many other kinds of exercise might be mentioned; but our limits will allow us to speak only of equestrian exercise. Confucius says that the gods do not count, in determining the length of a person's life, the days spent in the chase. Horseback-riding has this very decided advantage, that it affords a good deal of very enjoyable exercise with very little effort. Many people are unable, for want of strength, to obtain by walking or in the gymnasium the exercise which they require. This kind of exercise is peculiarly adapted to people who are inclined to pulmonary weakness. The erect position, the exhilaration of spirits, the deep inspirations which attend it, make this one of the most useful, while it certainly is one of the most enjoyable of exercises.—*N. Y. Independent*.

It has been said frequently that the people of the present stirring times live so fast, work so hard, and carry such great responsibilities, that they are not so long lived as their ancestors were. Proof to the contrary is accumulating rapidly. The Registrars of Scotland report that centenarianism is not uncommon there. The Registrar of Savoy reports the death, in December last, of a man 102 years and 10 months old. Of 13 deaths recorded at Barry, ten ranged from 60 to 100 years of age; in Baulf the ages of ten who died in the last quarter of the year ranged from 70 to 105 years. The number of those reaching 90 years is larger. The only death registered during the quarter at Duino was that of a woman who was close upon 98 years; one of the four who died at Austerhouse was a woman of 97 years; of ten deaths registered at Gairloch, four ranged from 68 to 78 years, two had reached 80 and 87 years respectively, one was aged 94 and another 97 years; of 31 deaths recorded at Tarves in 1877, two were of persons between 60 and 70 years of age, eight between 70 and 80, five between 80 and 90, and one above 90 years.—*Christian Intelligencer*.

SANITARY VENTILATION.—Prof. Joseph Rhodes Buchanan, in discussing ventilation before the New York Eclectic Medical Statistical Society, a few evenings since, said that no mechanical contrivance of traps and catch-basins can protect a house from sewer-gas. The drafts in the rooms, up the chimneys, must draw from the closets and bath-rooms a certain amount of poisonous gas. The remedy lies in the turning of the draft from the house into the sewer. A chimney could be built over the sewer at some convenient point; a fire could be kept burning in it. Thus the drafts would be from the house into the sewer, thence through the chimney all the poison would be carried away. The Professor suggested the placing of tubes, connected with a heated duct, near the heads of students, in schools, and over the beds of hospital patients, in order to draw away the impure air.—*N. Y. Observer*.

THE EUROPEAN MAIL says: "There can be no doubt that any quantity of disease-carrying particles may, and very often do, lurk between the leaves of books, newspapers, etc., which are read by fever patients. Magazines, newspapers, cheap paper-bound novels, and the books of the Bible, in the form of separate pamphlets, are suitable works for fever patients; but any book of so costly a nature as to cause a pang at burning it, must be regarded as rather dangerous in a fever ward."

THE VIRUS or transmissible principle of scarlet fever is destroyed when subjected to a temperature of 203° F. for two hours. A French physician, who has been experimenting on the subject, took the underclothing worn by four children while sick with the scarlet fever, and after heating them, as stated, caused four of his own children to wear them for several days. None of the children contracted the disease.

THE IMPURITIES that make water injurious to health are organic matters, such as are abundantly supplied by barnyards, drains and cemeteries, where the decay of animal and vegetable substance is going on. Some families who live on farms, and who fancy they are drinking the best of water, are, in fact constantly imbibing poison that will appear, perhaps, in the dreaded form of diphtheria or typhoid fever.—*Scientific American*.

An interesting paper was read at a recent meeting of the Royal Society on "Experimental Researches on the Temperature of the Head," in which the writer, Dr. Lombard, showed that mental activity will at once raise

the temperature of the head, and that merely to excite the attention has the same effect in a less degree.

DOMESTIC.

ROSE LEAVES.—These are nice to put in cake. Gather as many as wished, chop fine, mix in a little white sugar, spread on plates to dry. When perfectly dry, pack in cans and keep air-tight.

SUBSTITUTE FOR CAPEL SAUCE.—Half a pint of melted butter, two tablespoonfuls of cut parsley, half a teaspoonful of salt, one tablespoonful of vinegar. Boil the parsley slowly to let it become a good color; cut, but do not chop it fine. Add to it a half-pint of smoothly made melted butter, with salt and vinegar in the above proportions. Let it simmer two minutes, and then serve.—*Western Rural*.

CORN BEEF SOUP.—When the liquor in which the beef and vegetables were boiled is cold remove all the grease that has risen and hardened on top, and add tomatoes and tomato ketchup and boil half an hour—thus making an excellent tomato soup; or add to it rice, or sage, or pearl barley, or turn it into a vegetable soup by boiling in the liquor any vegetables that are fancied. Several varieties of soup may have this "stock" for a basis, and be agreeable and nutritious.

SPINACH.—Pick and wash quite clean a quantity of spinach. Put it in a saucepan with salt to taste, but no water, and, when quite done, squeeze all the moisture out of it, and pass it through a hair sieve. Dilute the pulp thus obtained slightly with well-flavored stock, make it boiling hot, add a dash of pepper, and at the time of serving put a pat of fresh butter in the dish. By adding more stock, this makes an excellent spinach soup.

RHUBARB AND APPLE JELLY.—Wipe, peel, and cut up a bundle of rhubarb, peel core, and quarter three pounds of apples; take the thin rind of half a dozen lemons, and put them into a preserving pan with one and a half pints or two quarts of filtered water and the juice of the lemons. Boil until reduced to a pulp. Strain the juice through a napkin, pressing the fruit well. Weigh the juice, and allow one pound of loaf sugar to every pound of juice. Boil up the juice, add the sugar, boil, skim well, and when it jellies on the skimmer pour into pots, and tie down when cold.

FRUIT PUDDING (cold).—Put a layer of any kind of fruit (previously stewed with sugar, and allowed to get cold) or jam into a deep glass dish, mix three tablespoonfuls of corn-flour with a gill of milk, boil one pint of milk with the thin rind of a lemon, and with sugar to taste; when well flavored with the lemon, pour the boiling milk through a strainer on to the cornflour, stir and return it to a saucepan; boil five minutes, or until it thickens, and when cool enough not to break the glass pour on the fruit, and leave it to get quite cold and set. Ornament according to fancies with jam, preserved fruit, or angelica.

GREEN PEA SOUP.—One peck of green peas four tablespoonfuls of lard, heated in the kettle; put in the peas and stir them until perfectly green; add pepper and salt, and pour in as much water as you want soup; boil three-quarters, then add one teacupful of milk, thickened with one tablespoonful of flour; put into the soup two or three young onions, cut fine and fried a light brown in butter. Just as you take it up, add yolks of two eggs beaten in a little cream.

HINTS ON WATERING PLANTS.—Plants set against walls and piazzas frequently suffer for want of water at this season, even when ground near them is quite wet. Draw away the soil around each plant so as to form a basin. Fill it with a bucketful of water, allowing it time to sink gradually away, and when the surface has dried a little draw in loosely the soil over it, and it will do without water for some weeks. This applies to all plants wanting water through the season. If water is merely poured on the surface, it is made more compact by the weight of water, and the harder the soil becomes the easier it dries; and the result is that more water you give the more is wanted. A well-known horticultural editor says the objection against watering when the sun shines on the plants is a purely theoretical one, and appears only in the writings of those who have had but little actual experience. Nevertheless, the evening is the proper time for watering, when the best results in the conservation of moisture are expected. Actual experience has taught that plants wilting from the effect of heat should be shaded, as well as watered. Experience has also taught that superficial waterings do little good. The water given should reach the roots of the plants. The great objection to watering under a hot sun is that the evaporation is so strong that much of the water given is quickly evaporated.